LISTING OF CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application.

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1. **(Once Amended)** A method for retrieving information stored in a database, wherein the database includes a set of records, wherein each of the records in the set includes a name field that stores a name, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a database query, wherein the query includes a query name;

for each record in the set:

determining whether the record [the records in the set that are] is likely to match the query [, wherein the step of determining the records in the set that are likely to match the query comprises the steps of selecting one of the records in the set and] by determining whether at least a portion of the name stored in the [selected] record's name field has a pronunciation that is equivalent to a pronunciation of at least a portion of the query name; and

for each record that is determined to likely match the query:

comparing at least a portion of the name included in the record's name field to at least a portion of the query name; and

determining a similarity measurement between the query name and the name stored in the record's name field based on the comparison.

2. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the step of comparing at least a portion of the name stored in the record's name field to at least a portion of the query name comprises the step of performing n-gram comparisons.

3. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the query name consists of one or more character stings, wherein each character string consists essentially of letters of the Roman alphabet.

4. (**Original**) The method of claim 3, wherein, for each record in the set, the method further comprises the steps of:

using symbols from a phonetic alphabet to generate a character string that represents a pronunciation of at least a portion of the name stored in the record's name field; and

associating the generated character string with the record.

5. (**Original**) The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of using symbols from the phonetic alphabet to generate at least one character string that represents a pronunciation of at least a portion of the query name.

6. (**Once Amended**) The method of claim 5, wherein the step of determining whether at least a portion of the name stored in the [selected] record's name field has a pronunciation that is equivalent to a pronunciation of at least a portion of the query name comprises the step of comparing the generated character string that is associated with the record to the generated character string that represents a pronunciation of at least a portion of the query name.

7. (**Original**) The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

using symbols from the phonetic alphabet to generate a first character string that represents a first pronunciation of at least a portion of the query name; and

using symbols from the phonetic alphabet to generate a second character string that represents a second pronunciation of said portion of the query name.

8. (**Once Amended**) The method of claim 7, wherein the step of determining whether at least a portion of the name stored in the [selected] record's name field has a pronunciation that is equivalent to a pronunciation of at least a portion of the query name comprises the step of comparing the generated character string associated with the record to the first character string and/or the second character string.

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9. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the query name is a full name.

10. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the query name is a first name.

11. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the query name is a surname.

12. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the query name comprises a first name and/or a surname.

13. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein each of said name fields stores a first name and/or a surname.

14. **(Original)** A method for retrieving information stored in a database, wherein the database includes a set of records, wherein each record in the set includes a name field that stores a name, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a database query, wherein the query includes a query name;

analyzing the query name to determine whether it belongs to a culture that is included in a set of identified cultures;

if the query name appears to belong to a culture that is included in the set of identified cultures, then selecting a set of rules and/or a set of algorithms that is associated with the culture to which the query name appears to belong, otherwise selecting a default set of rules and/or algorithms;

using at least a portion of the query name and a rule and/or algorithm from the selected set of rules and/or algorithms to generate one or more keys; and

determining those records in the set of records that match at least one of the generated keys.

15. **(Original)** The method of claim 14, further comprises the steps of:

selecting a record that was determined to match at least one of the generated keys; and

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comparing at least a portion of the name stored in the record's name field to at least a portion of the query name to determine a similarity measurement between the query name and the name stored in the record's name field.

16. **(Original)** The method of claim 15, wherein the step of comparing at least a portion of the name stored in the record's name field to at least a portion of the query name comprises the step of performing n-gram comparisons.

17. **(Original)** The method of claim 14, wherein the step of determining the records in the set that match at least one of the generated keys comprises the step of determining whether a key that is associated with a record in the set matches at least one of the generated keys.